

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

September 29, 1998

MINUTES

The Board of Education and the Board of Vocational Education met at the Martha Washington Inn, Abingdon, Virginia on Tuesday, September 29, 1998 with the following members present:

Mr. Kirk T. Schroder, President	Senator John W. Russell
Senator J. Brandon Bell, Vice President	Mrs. Lil Tuttle
Mrs. Jennifer C. Byler	
Mr. Mark C. Christie	Mr. Paul D. Stapleton
Mrs. Susan T. Noble	Secretary and Superintendent of
Mr. Robert H. Patterson, Jr.	Public Instruction

Mr. Schroder, president, presided and called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Senator Russell gave the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bill Brooks, School Board Chairman for Washington County, welcomed Board members to Southwest Virginia. Mr. Schroder introduced superintendents and local board members attending the meeting. After which, Mr. Schroder introduced Board of Education members and Mrs. Cherie Yecke, Deputy Secretary of Education. Mr. Schroder also acknowledged the Department of Education staff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Senator Russell made a motion for approval of the minutes of the July 23 meeting. Copies of the minutes had been distributed previously to all members of the Board for review. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Byler and carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The motion was made by Mr. Christie, seconded by Mrs. Byler, and carried unanimously for approval of the agenda.

DISCUSSION OF CURRENT ISSUES

Mrs. Byler requested that anyone with information on school bus safety please send it to her. Mr. Stapleton thanked Mr. Schroder for coming to Southwest Virginia and spending time visiting schools.

CONSENT AGENDA

The motion was made by Mr. Christie, seconded by Mrs. Noble, and carried unanimously for approval of the consent agenda.

- \$ Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Applications for Literary Fund Loans
- \$ Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Release of Literary Fund Loans for Placement on Waiting List
- \$ Final Review of Financial Report on Literary Fund
- \$ First Review of Requests for Increased Graduation Requirements

Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Applications for Literary Fund Loans

The Department of Education's recommendation for approval of seven new applications in the amount of \$31,120,000 subject to final approval by the Office of the Attorney General, was accepted by the Board of Education's vote on the consent agenda.

COUNTY, CITY OR TOWN	SCHOOL	AMOUNT
Suffolk City	Booker T. Washington Elementary	5,000,000.00
Virginia Beach City	W. T. Cooke Elementary	7,500,000.00
Hanover County	Atlee High	1,420,000.00
Wise County	Coeburn Primary	3,500,000.00
Wise County	Wise Primary	3,700,000.00
Wise County	J. W. Adams	5,000,000.00
Roanoke City	Addison Middle	5,000,000.00
	TOTAL	\$31,120,000.00

Final Review of Recommendations Concerning Release of Literary Fund Loans for Placement on Waiting List

The Department of Education's recommendation is that funds be released for nineteen projects in the amount of \$31,361,900, and that funding for seven projects in the amount of \$31,120,000 be deferred and the projects be placed on the First Priority Waiting List.

COUNTY, CITY, OR TOWN	SCHOOL	AMOUNT
King William County	Hamilton Holmes Middle	5,000,000.00
Nelson County	Rockfish River Elementary	5,000,000.00
Washington County	Watauga Elementary	960,100.00
Campbell County	Tomahawk Elementary	4,187,800.00
Hanover County	South Anna Elementary	2,080,000.00
Giles County	Macy McClaugherty	4,000,000.00
Newport News City	Crittenden Middle	75,000.00
Newport News City	Denbigh High	250,000.00
Newport News City	Dozier Middle	125,000.00
Newport News City	Gildersleeve Middle	125,000.00
Newport News City	Hines Middle	125,000.00
Newport News City	Huntington Middle	250,000.00
Newport News City	Menchville High	250,000.00
Newport News City	Reservoir High	125,000.00
Newport News City	Warwick High	184,000.00
Newport News City	Washington Middle	75,000.00
Richmond County	Rappahannock High	2,300,000.00
Spotsylvania County	New River Middle(Middle Sch. #6)	5,000,000.00
Roanoke City	Huff Lane Elementary	1,250,000.00
	TOTAL	\$31,361,900.00

FIRST PRIORITY WAITING LIST

COUNTY, CITY OR TOWN	SCHOOL	AMOUNT
Suffolk City	Booker T. Washington Elementary	5,000,000.00
Virginia Beach City	W. T. Cooke Elementary	7,500,000.00
Hanover County	Atlee High	1,420,000.00
Wise County	Coeburn Primary	3,500,000.00
Wise County	Wise Primary	3,700,000.00
Wise County	J. W. Adams	5,000,000.00
Roanoke City	Addison Middle	5,000,000.00
	TOTAL	\$31,120,000.00

Final Review of Financial Report on Literary Fund

The Department of Education's recommendation to approve the financial report on the status of the Literary Fund as of June 30, 1998, was accepted by the Board of Education's vote on the consent agenda.

First Review of Requests for Increased Graduation Requirements

The Department of Education's recommendation to waive first review and approve the requests from the school boards of Goochland County, Shenandoah County, and Wythe County, was accepted by the Board of Education's vote on the consent agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following persons spoke during the public comment period.

Ernie Braganza
Beverly Rowland
Barbara Chavatel
Buckey Boone
Sally Chadwell

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions were presented to the following:

- % Woodrow Mullins, Superintendent of Tazewell County Public Schools, 1998 State Superintendent of the Year
- % Bill Brooks, School Board Chairman, Washington County Public Schools
- % Misty Rene Horn, Senior, Richlands High School, Tazewell County Public Schools
- % Anne Bowman, Valedictorian, Lebanon High School, Russell County Public Schools
- % Pulaski County Public Schools, Vocational Education Program
- % Mary Belcher and Kara Perkins, Rocky Gap High School, Bland County Public Schools
- % Giles County Public Schools, Partnerships for Excellence Foundation, Inc.
- % Patrick County Public Schools for Consistent High Performance on the Literary Passport Test

First Review of Proposed Meeting Dates for 1999

Dr. James Laws brought before the board a list of meeting dates for 1999. The months of April, July and October were noted as meetings to be considered for other areas in the Commonwealth. Mrs. Noble made a motion to waive first review. The motion was seconded by Senator Russell and carried unanimously.

January 7	June 24
February 25	July 22
March 25	September 23
April 21, 22, 23	October 28
May 27	November 18

Senator Russell made a motion to adopt the proposed meeting dates for 1999. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christie and carried unanimously.

Discussion of the Standard Setting Policies for the Standards of Learning Tests

The Board of Education is slated to make a decision regarding the passing scores on

each of the twenty-seven tests of the Standards of Learning at its October 28-29 meeting. Throughout the summer, eight Standard Setting Committees met to follow a prescribed process to develop a recommendation to the Board of Education regarding the passing scores for each of the SOL tests. The Board also appointed a procedural oversight committee, Chaired by Dr. William C. Boshier, to review the procedures followed by the eight committees. The Board is scheduled to receive the report of the oversight committee and the recommendations from the eight Standard Setting committees on October 8.

Mrs. Cam Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Reporting, made a presentation regarding the processes and procedures used by the various committees. Mr. Mike Beck, the consultant who worked with the eight Standard Setting Committees, also reviewed the procedures used by the committees. Afterwards, the Board discussed the procedures and data to be used to determine the passing scores for the SOL tests.

Mr. Christie made a motion to adopt *Statement Setting Passing Scores on the Standards of Learning Tests: Principles and Considerations*. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Byler.

VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION STATEMENT

SETTING PASSING SCORES ON THE STANDARDS OF LEARNING TESTS: PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS

September 29, 1998

We believe it is our obligation to communicate, as openly as possible, to Virginia's students, parents, educators, taxpayers and the public, the principles and considerations that we intend to use as we determine the passing scores for Virginia's new Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.

Principles

The goal of our entire education reform initiative, from the adoption of new Standards of Learning to the development of new Standards of Accreditation, is to *raise student achievement*.

Helping our students reach the goal of higher achievement will require the good faith and dedication of everyone involved in public.

Consequently, we intend to set *honest, achievable* passing scores on the SOL tests. The bar must be set high enough to raise student achievement to prepare them for the world in which they will live in the 21st century. This is especially important for children for whom expectations historically have been too low. However, the bar must not be set so high that it is unrealistic and consequently discourages efforts on the parts of both educators and students to reach it. Achieving this important balance will require a process of continual review and improvement of the SOL testing program, a process that will extend beyond the immediate moment of setting the passing scores.

We will set the scores based on what each child *should* know in order to succeed in the subject area

at the next grade level and beyond. In determining that level of knowledge, we will give great deference to the people best qualified to make that determination: the classroom teachers, principals, curriculum specialists and parents who have spent this past summer working hard to make test score recommendations.

We believe that every child deserves an equal opportunity to demonstrate his or her capability for learning and higher achievement, regardless of the difficulty of his or her circumstances. Thus, we will *not* manipulate the scores in order to inflate passing rates or to cover up weaknesses in our children's education. Nor will we set different passing scores based on demographic or geographic data. Either action would do a gross disservice to the school children of Virginia, all of whom deserve high expectations and are equally deserving of help in meeting those expectations, regardless of ethnic, gender or socioeconomic background.

We seek to raise the achievement level of all our children, so they can be successful participants in the 21st century and responsible citizens of our Commonwealth and nation. We hold a strong faith in Virginia's teachers, educators and public schools. With the support of parents, communities and public officials, all of us working together *as partners*, we believe that Virginia's students and public schools can reach these high standards.

Considerations

The following considerations will be used as we determine passing scores:

1. Reports from the Standard Setting Committees, comprised primarily of Virginia public school classroom teachers, principals, superintendents, and parents, which will contain ranges of recommended passing scores on each SOL test and related data,
2. Contextual issues, such as, whether a test in grades 3, 5, or 8 is in a skill such as reading that is fundamental to success in all other courses,
3. Data from the spring 1998 SOL tests that illustrate for each SOL test the percentage increase in failure rates for every increase of one point in the passing score within the ranges of passing scores recommended by the Standard Setting Committees,
4. National comparative test data, to the extent that it is possible, to compare Virginia's SOL test performance with performance on national tests such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

This does not represent an exclusive list of considerations, nor will each consideration listed above be equally weighted. Other considerations may enter into our deliberations; however, these will be the primary ones. Of these, the most important will clearly be the recommendations of the Standard Setting Committees of local Virginia educators and parents.

The Board, after careful review and deliberation, adopts these Principles and Considerations for Setting the Passing Scores for the Standards of Learning Tests, as witnessed by the signature of the President of the Board of Education on behalf of the Virginia Board of Education, this 29th day of September 1998. Further, the Department of Education is directed to widely distribute these Principles and Considerations for all to see, so that the public is apprised of the intentions of the Board of Education in this matter.

President, Virginia Board of Education

Mrs. Byler made a motion to make the following change in the first sentence under AConsiderations@ to change from Awill@be used to Amay@be used. Senator Bell seconded the motion for purpose of discussion. For a lack of votes, the motion was not carried.

The motion was carried unanimously to adopt the statement in its original form.

Report on the A. Linwood Holton Governor=s School

The Department received a request to establish an Academic Year Governor=s School to serve the counties of Lee, Wise, Scott, Dickenson, Buchanan, Tazewell, Washington, Smyth, Wythe, and the cities of Bristol and Norton. Recommendation by the Department of Education is required in the Administrative Procedures Guide for the Establishment of Academic Year Governor=s Schools. The proposed A. Linwood Holton Governor=s School was approved with conditions, to be met by July 1, 1998.

Senator Russell made a motion to allow the program to operate, with full funding during 1998-99, and extend conditional Board approval until July, 1999. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Byler and carried unanimously.

Report on the Establishment of the Best Practice Centers

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is establishing three regional Governor=s Best Practice Centers. Located in central, southside and southwest Virginia, these centers will enhance the Department of Education=s ability to offer a helping hand to local schools and school divisions struggling to meet the educational needs of all students.

The mission of the Governor=s Best Practice Centers is to assist local school divisions, superintendents, principals, and teachers to meet the standards of accreditation through improved student academic performance.

A slide presentation by Mr. Richard Layman, Deputy Superintendent, Department of Education and Mrs. Jo Bunce, Assistant Superintendent, Best Practice Centers, described what the centers look like, how the centers will be staffed, and the kinds of services the centers will provide.

The Best Practice Centers are located in Marion at the Smyth County School Board Office, Harrisonburg at James Madison University, and Farmville at the Prince Edward County School Board Office.

Report from Superintendent=s Advisory Committee on School Safety

In 1997, Virginia's General Assembly passed legislation (HB 1851) requiring each school in the state to conduct a school safety audit. Following this legislation, the Department of Education developed the *School Safety Audit Protocol: Guidelines, Procedures, and Checklists* as a tool for schools to use in conducting the safety audits.

Dr. Woodrow Mullins, Chairman of the Superintendent's School Safety Advisory Committee, reported that the audit *Protocol* outlines ten components that should be assessed to determine the overall safety of the school environment. These components are: safety and security of building and grounds, development and enforcement of policies, procedures for data collection, development of prevention and intervention plans, level of staff development, opportunities of student involvement, level of parent and community involvement, role of law enforcement, development of crisis management plans, and standards for safety and security personnel. The Board accepted the report.

Update on Charter Schools Federal Grant Application

At the June 1998 meeting of the Board of Education, the Board was informed that Virginia is eligible to compete for federal charter school startup funds. The application would not be available until the end of July and would be due by mid-August for consideration for funding. Since the Board would not be meeting until after the application would be submitted, Mr. Schroder and Senator Bell were asked to review the application when it was ready, and the Department of Education was authorized to submit an application for competition. The DOE understood that they would be notified by September 30 of the results of the grant competition and allocations of funds for FY99. The DOE would return to the Board to receive authorization to receive these federal funds in September or October.

Mrs. Diane Atkinson, Assistant Superintendent, Policy and Public Affairs, stated that the Department has not heard whether Virginia will receive funds for charter schools. The item will be moved to the next Board meeting.

First Review of Matters Concerning House Joint Resolution No. 114 (Youth Risk-Behavior Survey)

The 1998 General Assembly requested the Department of Education to administer a youth risk behavior survey approved by the Board of Education and local school boards. The Department shall report on the results of the survey to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1, 1999.

Mr. Schroder stated that he will work with the Department staff and report back to Board members. Board members were also requested to give written comments about the survey to Mr. Schroder. Mr. Patterson and Senator Russell will also serve on the committee

with Mr. Schroder.

Mr. Schroder announced that the presentation made by Cam Harris on Standard Setting Policies for the Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessments will be made available to other educational groups in October. Mrs. Tuttle suggested that the presentation be video taped and made available to any public organization.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Schroder adjourned the meeting of the Virginia Board of Education and the Board of Vocational Education at 3:25 p.m.

President

Secretary of the Board